

CONTROVERSIAL.

"THE AGITATION OF THOUGHT IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM."

The Editors reserve the right to erase all improper personalities and objectionable expressions found in any article accepted for this department; and they alone shall be the judges.

Parvum in Multo.

BY NOSAM.

The "weak brother" whom Paul so frequently recommends to the charity of the church, is, in these days very unmercifully treated. Judging by many who lay claim to being strong, they manifest great weakness by their intolerance and lack of charity. If we are in earnest when we pray "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us," and the Lord takes us at our word, many of us will receive but little mercy.

Some of us think we know a great deal, and we manifest much impatience toward those whom we think do not know as much as we do. Such knowledge is injurious. It is a great pity that more of us do not realize that we have ignorance—a great deal more ignorance than knowledge. If our knowledge included a knowledge of ignorance, there could be more tolerance and charity.

Paul's doctrine of abstinence for the sake of others, as taught in the 14th and 15th chapter of Romans and 1 Cor. 8: 10-13, is a principle which covers more ground than some are willing to concede to it. Notice carefully that it is not the eating and drinking in itself that Paul condemns, but the result of the eating and drinking. The principle is that we must abstain from that which will prove a stumbling block to others. Now just apply this doctrine to whisky, card-playing, tobacco, theaters, dancing, skating rinks, and all the other much questioned practices, and it will not leave us in doubt as to what is our duty. We do not need to confine our Scriptural authority for the prohibition of these things to the much abused Romans 12: 2. Paul's doctrine of abstinence for the sake of others condemns everything that is injurious to the morals and spiritual well-being of our fellow men.

How common it is for a sinner to think that the barriers between himself and God are of God's rearing, and not of the sinner's upbuilding.

A ship lately left England for China with the following articles among its cargo: Opium, rum, a lot of small idols intended for sale to families as household gods, a lot of Bibles, Testaments and tracts from the British and Foreign Bible Society. Besides these there were two Christian missionaries on their way to their foreign field of labor in heathen lands. Bibles, opium, idols and missionaries in the same ship, going to the same destination, from the same Christian land—what a disgrace! What kind of an influence will such a state of affairs exert over heathendom, especially when we take into consideration that England professes to be one of the great champions of Christianity? No doubt that every professing Christian will loudly condemn this, and yet if we could look into the hearts and pockets of many Sunday Christians as they leave the house of God on Sabbath, with solemn face, Bible in hand, we would see just such a state of affairs on a small scale. The plug of tobacco, and the pocket-book, which often is a household god, and the Bible all on the same person. When this is the case it is bad.

When a person shows great indignation at the faults of others, it is not always a sign that they are indignant at their own faults.

There are two kinds of professing Christians in the world—those who improve and strive to become more and more like the Master and those who stand still and do not grow in grace. These stand-still and go-ahead elements are found in every congregation. By watching the Christian influence of the church on the community it can be easily told which element predominates.

Never neglect that which you can easily acquire in your anxiety to obtain that which is beyond your reach. How often do we find professing Christians, filled with interpretations of the prophecies, and ready to unravel the mysteries of the Revelations, and yet know but little of the practical interpretations of the plain teaching of the sermon on the mount! There are some who are thoroughly conversant with the theories of religion yet strange to true vital piety. What use is there in a man getting in ecstasies over the conversion of the heathen, yet neglecting the souls of his own family.

"Down-town" Christianity is in great demand now. Too many of us leave our Christianity at the meeting-house or at home and do not carry it down town with us. Take it with you, brethren. Don't confine it to your Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes. Have a good supply of the good, practical, old-fashioned kind always on hand.

Brethren Editors, your two column leading editorial of No. 6, contained two remarks—do not

understand me to say there were only two—but there were two very important; therefore with your permission, I will draw the attention of your readers to them the second time, hoping thereby to impress their importance on the brotherhood. The first was: "The division between the Old Order and the Progressives was natural, and perhaps inevitable. The third division of the so-called Conservatism was dictated by policy alone and was altogether uncalled for." Nothing can be truer than that. The Conservative party is made up of a mixture of Old Order and Progressives, and it is easy to see in each congregation which element holds the balance of power. Then the next remark is: "The foundation for the conservative church was laid when a young aspirant stole into the office of the *Christian Family Companion*, and feloniously purloined the subscription list, representing years of honest labor, and upon that foundation started a policy journal which could blow hot or cold, or not blow at all, as self interest dictated." Your readers would like to know who that "young aspirant" was. If you cannot tell us that, tell us what was the journal?

Somebody asked me the other day why such men as D. N. Workman, Landon West, Jesse Calvert and others, who were and still are opposed to Annual Meeting, were found amongst the German Baptists? I can only see two reasons: First, that they believed the movement would be short-lived, therefore did not fall in with it. Then being compelled to take sides and speak and act against us, they have not the moral courage to take it all back. Second, afraid that they would not be in the lead, they would prefer to remain and be among the prominent ones in the German Baptist church than get down to their proper level among the Brethren. If it is not one of these reasons, then I give it up. One thing I am sure of, they do not remain with the German Baptists because they endorse their creed and actions.

God's Providence.

BY JOHN STANTON.

When the rain falls the air is darkened, the light of the sun is shut out, the song of birds is hushed, the foliage is bedewed with tears and the flowers fold their leaves and bow their heads as if in grief. Rain seems to have taken possession of the peaceful heavens and the suffering earth; but when the cloud has swept by and left the blessing of the rain behind, the light breaks forth with new brilliancy, the whole face of nature is wreathed in smiles, and all the singing tribes in the woods and meadows lift up their voices in thankful song.

So, to many a poor, burdened soul it seems a dark hour when Christ comes, laden with blessings to make heaven in his heart. He wishes to be happy, and Christ makes him weep; he wants to think well of himself, and the sight of the blessed Christ crowned with thorns and nailed to the cross, makes him feel the burden of his sins as he never did before; he wants to love the world and carry his head as high as the proudest, and when he looks upon the meek and lowly Christ, he feels like bowing down with shame and humiliation; he wants to move on in the journey of life easily, and Christ lays a cross upon his shoulders and bids him carry it all the way. He is surprised and disappointed, and he wonders how it can be said that religion makes people happy. But let him believe Christ. Even though the silent look of the suffering Savior should break his heart and make him weep, let him receive Him as the thirsty field receives the rain, and his heart shall be filled with gladness.—North Liberty, O.

The Upright in Heart.

BY D. J. HETRIC.

"Him will I accept,"—Job 42: 8.

Eliphaz was not upright in heart toward God, and had not spoken right in his sight; hence, there was no acceptance. But the Lord recognized the pure motive of Job's heart and said, "Him will I accept. So it is in all we do as God's children; for he always looks for uprightness in heart toward him, before he accepts our petition. Had there been any impure motive in the hearts of Paul and Silas when they prayed and sang praises in the prison at midnight, would the foundations of the prison have shaken? Would their bands have loosed? would there have been an earthquake? would the lord have accepted and released them? No. If we would do a work for the Lord, let it appear great or small, we must do it unto the Lord. What telling results would follow if the Lord could see more uprightness of heart in the work of his professed followers.

Let us all remember that in coming to the Lord in prayer, uprightness in heart toward God is the essential pre-requisite to having our prayers accepted and answered.—Oakland, Pa.

Christianity vs. Religion.

JOHN MILTON.

Christianity is religion, but religion is not always Christianity. The apostle Paul in Acts 17th, tells of people who had too much religion; but no inspired man tells of any one having too much Christianity. What is Christianity? Is it not the religion taught by Christ? Then reason would teach us that anything in the shape of religion, however respectable, desirable, emotional or otherwise, that is not taught by Christ, would not be Christianity. We have a host of religions that wear the garb, but as to the reality, they are in a state of bankruptcy. When our Lord distinctly states the conditions of eternal life, John 3: 5, and some religion in its teachings and practice denies those conditions, it is very plain that such religion is not of Christ. In Heb. 11: 2, the statement is made that Jesus Christ is the author and finisher of our faith. What faith? The faith once delivered to the saints; the one faith spoken of by Paul in Eph. 4: 5.

Don't be deceived by supposing that if a man is sincerely religious that he is a Christian. He must be in accord with the scripture teaching to be a Christian. Sincerity is one of the most effective means, when not coupled with divine truth. I would rather be identified with anything than that which is merely accepted or taken for granted. Search the Scriptures, determine in your own mind what is Christianity and what is not, bearing in mind that the Bible is the one and only infallible rule, and that all creeds, being man-made, are not inspired; and, as a matter of course, are false.

The Church.

BY AARON HOOVER.

The word church as it stands in the English Testament, means, according to a Greek signification, to call out of or from among. In several instances our translators have rendered it assembly. This is its primary sense which underlies all its applications in the New Testament. It is said the heathen Greeks used the term to denote the select assemblies of free citizens convened for the transaction of public affairs, in which the common people or strangers had no right. It is used by Stephen to denote the congregation of the children of Israel in the wilderness, who had been called forth from Egypt and were on their way to the promised land. It is sometimes used to denote the entire community of Christian people of all nations and ages as where the Savior says, "Upon this rock will I build my church;" and where Paul exhorts the elders to feed the church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood. It is also used to denote the small company of Christians belonging to one household, as where we read of Nymphas and the church which is in his house.

But its general application is to denote some particular society of Christians in the same neighborhood or city, organized among a common altar and coming together at stated time for the worship of God; we read of the church at Corinth, and the church which is at Jerusalem. It means an assembly convened by authority and constituted of a specific class out of or from the general mass of the population. It, therefore, should set forth to the outside world what a true church is.

The Gospel everywhere speaks of a calling and an election, and the true Church is the organized society of the called and elect. It is the assembly or community of those whom God has called out from the world into a common fellowship of faith, hope and obedience, and which is preserved and perpetuated by means of services and functions included in that call; and wherever there is a company of such as have received, believed and practiced the Gospel, organized into one body in the charge of a minister of the Gospel (not creeds), and coming together at stated times for the worship of God, there is a true church.—Glenford, O.

Thankfulness.

Said a very old man, "Some folks are always complaining about the weather, but I am very thankful when I wake up in the morning and find any weather at all." We may smile at the simplicity of the old man, but still his language indicates a spirit that contributes much to calm and peaceful life. It is better and wiser to cultivate that spirit than to be always complaining, as we are. Be thankful for such mercies as you have, and if God sees it will be for your good and his glory, he will give you many more. At least, do not make yourself and others unhappy by your ingratitude and complaints.

A cupful of wind is better than no wind at all.

He who sows brambles must look well to his shoes.